

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2018

2018 Spy Pond Park Fun Day

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Working on a large sculpture of discs provided by Arlington Public Art, courtesy of the Boston Architectural Society

So many went over the top to make Fun Day special this year! Thanks to volunteers, there were:

- More faces painted than ever before with to two very artistic painters, Lisa Reynolds and Jennifer Park;
- So many leaf-prints made with leaves freshly picked that morning by the early-rising Lally Stowell and Sally Hempstead;
- Shorter waits than ever to take boat rides to Elizabeth Island, because the Arlington-Belmont Crew Team lent 3 boats, and Ann Royer and Peter Belknap and others from the Arlington Land Trust streamlined the process;
- More glorious music sets organized by Mark Sandman and Joe Burns of Kickstand Café, with longer sets than past years by the Lokensgard Blechbaser Ensemble Brass Band, Aunt Mimi and the Harmonators - and more martial arts to watch with Charles DeVirgilio's giving his students a lesson in the park before their demonstration;
- More photos taken than most past years with Elaine Crowder and Fred Moses taking shifts to cover the whole 3 hours and Lina Hadaad helping to document them;
- Lots of water-squirting hijinks at the Toddler Table with the mischievous Dick Norcross, and an abundance of toddlers coloring and playing at the table, thanks to the team of Dick and hard-working new volunteer, Hui Ren;
- two amazing new kid-magnets - the live snake and stuffed fox at the multi-activity PuddleStompers' booth set up by Sarah Feit; and the building disks Cecily Miller of Arlington Public Arts borrowed from a Boston architectural firm;
- So many bark boats created and launched, including by younger boat-builders than in the past with Pinal Maniar and Jill McArthur helping 3-, 2- and even 1-year-olds to make them;
- New activities at my puzzle booth from Mass Audubon to educate scads of big kids about animal habitats, and more kids who got binoculars as prizes than ever before;
- Combined information tables for FSPP and Mystic River Watershed Association under one canopy, staffed by Karen Grossman and Marshall McCloskey, with Laura Kiesel giving out rodent information nearby, information-seekers learning more all in one stop;
- Better publicity than ever before, due to Elaine Crowder's generating a huge Advocate article as well as other coverage; Lally Stowell's putting flyers up and down Mass Ave; and Karen Grossman's emailing hundreds of Arlington parents via the PTO lists; and
- No hitches the whole day because of the work by set-up and take-down volunteers Hui Ren, Jennifer Park, Gail Leondar-Wright, Sally Hempstead and of course the hardest-working of all Fun Day volunteers, Marshall McCloskey, who began hauling furniture and canopies on Friday, was in the park unloading stuff at 8:30 am, and was still indefatigably hauling stuff back to the shed and multiple other locations late Saturday afternoon.

THANK YOU! I'm just bursting with appreciation for you all.

Editor's note: Of course, much gratitude from all of us goes to Betsy Leondar-Wright, Spy Pond Park Activities Coordinator, for her wonderful, thoughtful, detailed planning for and execution of 2018's Spy Pond Park Fun Day!



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

The Harmonators Joe Burns (l), Dianne Iannitelli (rear) and Glen Woodworth (r) offered great harmonies, fine guitar work and hand percussion entertainment on Fun Day

A Healthy Breath of Fresh Air

by Betsy Leondar-Wright



Ruby Henney was excited by the magnitude of the sculpture built by many children and parents throughout the 3 hours of Fun Day

Four reasons that Fun Day made me happy:

1. Overheard at Spy Pond Fun Day, from an adorable 6-year-old boy: *"This is my favorite activity. I like it even better than apple-picking!"*

In an era where "Nature Deprivation Disorder" is widespread among America's children, it's refreshing to see kids of all ages building bark boats, walking on the island, gathering around a huge snake, and making leaf prints.

2. Said by a very small girl (who looked too young to know a word like "compostable") after a conversation with me about why not to feed the geese: *"I'm on the Green Team at school. We replaced the styrofoam trays with compostable cardboard."*

This is a generation who will likely face ecological crises beyond any that we adults have yet tackled. So it's satisfying to see them taking environmental education so seriously. For example, I watched many of them complete the "Find 4 people doing things that hurt Spy Pond" puzzle, then ask questions about phosphorus fertilizer and the storm drains. Some of them passed up toys as their prizes and instead chose grown-up nature books (donated by the Book Rack), such as field guides to insects and reptiles.

3. Said by an intrepid preschooler about her disk tower: *"Look! I made it taller than me!"*

American kids spend an average of six hours a day looking at electronic screens; problems like carpal tunnel are showing up earlier and earlier, and rising rates of ADHD and anxiety have been attributed to too much screen time. How healthy to spend the morning building towers and racing around hunting leaves instead!

4. Overheard after face-painting: *"Daddy, I'm a bunny!"*

What a flood of cuteness came pouring into the park that day! When Fun Day is in the morning (unlike the afternoon festivals in most of the past 15+ years), fewer big kids attend, due to soccer and other obligations - but we get far more toddlers. Kids new to walking were lurching around crashing into benches and disk-towers. They said their crayon smudges were fish; they hugged and kissed their stuffed-animal prizes; they got paint all over themselves. Some bark-boat makers were four, three or two years old, and even one 18-month-old. Who cared if their boats didn't float? They didn't! We could all benefit from tapping into our inner toddler.

When I put Fun Day in all these contexts, I realize what a good thing it is we do every year. There were forty-six volunteers, musicians and martial artists at this Fun Day - a big community effort with healthy results.

Wholehearted Thanks to Beautification Volunteers!

By Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee

A wholehearted thank you to all who volunteered during our monthly Saturday Work Days this past spring, summer and fall. Spy Pond Park would not be the beautiful, welcoming place it is without your many hours of work, enthusiasm and community spirit. Some of you participated on your own, some with family and friends, and some with a group from your school, community or workplace. Some of you are trusted regulars who come many times each season. Some of you came for the first time and will, we hope, return next season. Together, you pulled or cut back invasive plants that attempt to crowd out native plants and bushes in our planting beds. You collected trash and recyclables, raked the playground, dug trenches and removed tall grasses from the front and back of the fences bordering the planting beds. You cleared weeds and grasses from between the cobblestones that line the main path. You removed fallen branches, cleaned Lin-



Volunteers from the same East Arlington neighborhood, (l-r) Isaac Provost, Ani Brenne, Hank Fliggburger, and Tor Brenne came to help in Spy Pond Park on August 18

wood Beach and trimmed the hedges at Linwood Circle so that visitors always have a clear view of our spectacular pond. You cleared storm drains each month. By cutting back undergrowth, you helped preserve the beautiful view of the pond from the benches near the stone wall next to the boat ramp. You watered newly-planted trees near Linwood Beach.

Many of you contributed in your own ways by offering valuable advice and suggestions, by collecting trash as you walk through the park, by identifying and pulling poison ivy from the beds, by encouraging other individuals and organizations to participate, by becoming members, and by renewing your memberships which make it possible for us to purchase new tools and supplies. All of your contributions we appreciate greatly.

We would like to give special thanks to the groups who worked so diligently with us this season, several of whom have participated for many years. Students and alumni from Boston University's Global Day of Service once again opened the season by willingly taking on every job they were given, including watering the new trees, trimming hedges, clearing Linwood Beach of branches, leaves and debris from winter months, cutting back tall grasses from the fences, clearing storm drains and tackling pervasive and invasive false indigo, bittersweet, Japanese honeysuckle and multi-flor rose. These ongoing challenging tasks were taken on in following months with equal enthusiasm and energy by members of Capital One Bank; Arlington Scouts, their parents and organizer, Curtis Puncher; and by Charles DeVirgilio with members of his Zhen Ren Chuan martial arts classes. Members of all three groups came on two Saturday Work Days, motivated and eager to get to work. Students and teachers from Matignon High School also took on these important tasks when they arrived as part of Matignon's annual Day of Service. Once again, they were a very polite, respectful, hard-working group of teenagers. Energetic and hardworking also describes the 60 Hardy School 4th graders who worked at record speed removing weeds from the cobblestones during their field day to Spy Pond Park. Great to see youth of all ages working to help their community and to preserve the environment!

For our last Work Day in October, we look forward to having members of the Arlington High School swim team participate. We also welcome back long-time volunteers Lori Tsuruda and members of People Making a Difference™. They will take on end of the season trimming and pruning of our overgrown hedges at Linwood Circle, a job that requires expertise, patience and a lot of careful teamwork - all of which Lori and her team have displayed over the many years they have participated.

A special thanks also goes to Asian Zadeh, owner of Domino's Pizza in Arlington Center. On his own initiative, he sent delicious and much appreciated pizzas to volunteer workers to add to the Food Link snacks that we receive. A welcome surprise and demonstration of community spirit!

We hope you continue to visit Spy Pond Park over the winter months and return to help us nurture spring plants and flowers during our monthly Work Days next year beginning in April and ending in October.

President's Letter

Greetings,

This year has been a wonderful year for the Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) from well attended Work Days to the fabulous Fun Day! Thanks, especially, to the faithful participation of board members. Treasurer--Joanie Walls, Recording Secretary--Marshall McCloskey, Beautification Committee Leader--Lally Stowell, Co-Chairs of Outreach and Communications-- Sally Hempstead and Jamie Ciocco, Webmaster--Fred Moses, Chair of Publicity-- Elaine Crowder, Chair for Park Events--Betsy Leondar-Wright, Membership Secretary--Daniel Jalkut, and the many volunteers who came to all our Work Days who are all responsible for FSPP's successful 2018. I am extremely grateful for all their continued support.

Community Preservation funds will provide most of the money for the Erosion Control and Edge Protection Project about which we've written previously. However, to date the amount does not include money for the accessible path project resistant to erosion. Therefore, the Friends of Spy Pond Park has donated \$5,000 for this purpose. Lela Shephard has resigned her position as liaison to the Conservation Commission and the recently hired Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent, Emily Sullivan, will be making a presentation at our Annual Meeting. I hope you can attend to hear about the construction plans for 2019.

Mailchimp reports indicate that 19-30.4% of the email list opens FSPP emails regarding Work Days or meeting notices. However, when we sent the notice about the development planned on the shore of Spy Pond, 51.1% opened the email with 13.1% clicking on links provided, much more than usual to read about and respond to this urgent issue.

We'll be sending out our December 2nd Annual Meeting notice and end of year donation solicitation soon. If you haven't become a FSPP member this calendar year and/or you wish to make an additional donation, November or December will be the time for you to do so. We always appreciate the faithful support so many of you have given either through your volunteer efforts or your financial contributions.

Have a great holiday season!

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

Annual Meeting
at the Jefferson Cutter House
Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018

5 pm potluck dinner, 6 pm meeting

Lower level parking lot entrance, speaker Emily Sullivan,
Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent:
"2019 Spy Pond Park Shoreline and Path Construction"

& at Karen Grossman's
Sunday, Jan. 27, 2019, 7:00pm
32 Hamilton Road #402

Park on Linwood Street off Mass. Ave. or on
Lakehill off Lake St. at the far end of the complex.

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990
email fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

To join Friends of Spy Pond Park...

Send your annual dues (\$15 individual, \$25 household, \$5 low-income) to:
FSPP, P.O. Box 1051, Arlington, MA 02474-0021
For more information, call a Friends officer.

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Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to
fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Molly proudly displayed her completed bark boat for her mother to admire

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Every child who viewed the live snake at the Puddlestompers table was enthralled

PHOTO BY CURTIS PUNCHER



Uncovering a storm drain after heavy rainfall was hard work

PHOTO BY RAM SUBRAMANIAN



Charles DeVirgilio and volunteers representing Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts Studio rest after their hard work on July 21 in Spy Pond Park